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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/579,250	05/12/2006	Hee-Joo Jeon	NEK-0031	7111
23413 7590 10/03/2008 CANTOR COLBURN, LLP 20 Church Street 22nd Floor Hartford, CT 06103				
EXAMINER CHEUNG, WILLIAM K				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1796				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
10/03/2008		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

usptopatentmail@cantorcolburn.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/579,250

Applicant(s)

JEON ET AL.

Examiner

WILLIAM K. CHEUNG

Art Unit

1796

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 September 2008.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/CDC)
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

DETAILED ACTION

Request for Continued Examination

1. The request filed on September 2, 2008 for a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) under 37 CFR 1.53(d) based on parent Application No. 10/579,250 is acceptable and a RCE has been established. An action on the RCE follows.
2. The examiner acknowledges the receipt of the amendment filed July 1, 2008. Claims 1-26 are pending.
3. In view of the amendment filed July 1, 2008, the objection of claim 18 is withdrawn.
4. In view of the amendment filed July 1, 2008, the rejection of Claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tachibana et al. (US 4,035,563) as evident by Gloesener et al. (US 5,214,092) in view of the product literature of Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co., on Nano calcium carbonate (1993), is withdrawn. Further, the rejection of Claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tachibana et al. (US 4,035,563) as evident by Gloesener et al. (US 5,214,092) in view of the product literature of Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co., on Nano calcium carbonate (1993), further in view of Mathur et al. (US 4,980,395) as evident by Determan (US 5,912,277), is withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
6. Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tachibana et al. (US 4,035,563) as evident by Gloesener et al. (US 5,214,092) in view of the product literature of Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co., on Nano calcium carbonate (1993), and further in view of Polanco et al. (US 2003/0203695 A1).

1. (Currently Amended) A nano calcium carbonate/vinyl chloride monomer dispersion composition comprising:

a vinyl chloride monomer;

nano calcium carbonate; and

a lipophilic dispersing agent, which comprises 1-30 parts by weight of nano calcium carbonate per 100 parts by weight of the vinyl chloride monomer, ~~the nano calcium carbonate being modified with a metal salt of an organic acid~~

~~wherein the nano calcium carbonate is dispersed in the vinyl chloride and the surface of nano calcium carbonate is modified by being treated with a metal salt of an organic acid; and~~

~~wherein the lipophilic dispersing agent has a functional group of phosphoric acid, carboxylic acid or its salt or ester so that it is chemically compatible with the modified surface of the nano calcium carbonate.~~

Tachibana et al. (col. 5, line 15-47) disclose a process for preparing a dispersion composition comprising adding a water soluble metallic salt, which include calcium carbonate as a water soluble metallic salt. Although Tachibana et al. disclose that amount of calcium carbonate used is 100 ppm to water, when the such concentration of calcium carbonate solution is added to the vinyl chloride monomers with other ingredients such as methanol, initiator (col. 1, line 12) and suspension stabilizer (col. 1, line 12), which would lower the solubility characteristics of calcium carbonate in water, causing the calcium carbonate to precipitate. As evident in Gloesener et al. (col. 2, line 67 to col. 3, line 2), the precipitation of calcium carbonate is an easy method for making nano-size particles of calcium carbonate. In view of the evidence of Gloesener et al., the examiner has a reasonable basis to believe that the process of Tachibana et al. also involve the precipitation of the calcium carbonate while preparing a mixtures comprising vinyl chloride monomers in the presence of lipophilic dispersing agents. Since the PTO

does not have proper means to conduct experiments, the burden of proof is now shifted to applicants to show otherwise. In re Best, 562 F.2d 1252, 195 USPQ 430 (CCPA 1977); In re Fitzgerald, 205 USPQ 594 (CCPA 1980).

Regarding the claimed lipophilic dispersion agents, Tachibana et al. (col. 1, line 12) clearly disclose the use of suspension stabilizer as well as initiator. Tachibana et al. (col. 8, claim 5) disclose the use of partially saponified polyvinyl alcohol (or polyvinyl acetate), cellulose, gelatin, and tricalcium phosphate.

The difference between the invention of claims 1-8 and Tachibana et al. is that Tachibana et al. are silent on a composition comprising 1-30 parts by weight of nano calcium carbonate per 100 parts by weight of vinyl chloride monomer.

However, the product literature of Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co., on Nano calcium carbonate (1993) teaches that nano calcium carbonates are suitable as filler for polyvinyl chloride polymers. Therefore, motivated by the expectation of success of obtaining a polyvinyl chloride filled with nano calcium carbonate for PVC cable applications, which are products formed by extrusion processes, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in art to incorporate the filler teachings and the extrusion teachings of the product literature of Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co., into Tachibana et al. to obtain the invention of claims 1-8.

The further difference between the invention of claims 1-8 and Tachibana et al. /Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co. is that the Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co. is silent that the surface on the nano calcium carbonate has been modified with an organic acid.

However, Polanco et al. (page 2, 0021) disclose that it is beneficial to modify calcium carbonate fillers with a fatty acid such as stearic acid to facilitate the free flow of the particles and their ease of dispersion into the polymer matrix. Motivated by the expectation of success of improving the ease of dispersion into the polymer matrix, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in art to modify calcium carbonate fillers with a fatty organic acid to obtain the invention of claims 1-8.

Applicant's arguments filed July 1, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Regarding applicants' argument on the product by process features of claim 8, applicants must recognize that the claimed invention relates to a PVC based nanocomposite resin product that does not necessarily include water in it. "[E]ven though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." In re Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

7. Claims 1-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tachibana et al. (US 4,035,563) as evident by Gloesener et al. (US 5,214,092) in view of the product literature of Fujian Sannong Calcium Carbonate Co., on Nano calcium

carbonate (1993), in view of Polanco et al. (US 2003/0203695 A1), further in view of Mathur et al. (US 4,980,395) as evident by Detterman (US 5,912,277).

9. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a PVC based nanocomposite resin composition comprising the steps of:

(a) adding nano calcium carbonate modified with a metal salt of an organic acid and a lipophilic dispersing agent to a vinyl chloride monomer to disperse them,

wherein the nano calcium carbonate is dispersed in the vinyl chloride and the surface of nano calcium carbonate is modified by being treated with a metal salt of an organic carboxylic acid, and wherein the lipophilic dispersing agent has a functional group of phosphoric acid, carboxylic acid or its salt or ester so that it is chemically compatible with the modified surface of the nano calcium carbonate;

(b) adding the resultant mixture system to an aqueous solution system comprising deionized water, a suspension stabilizer and a polymerization initiator to prepare a suspension system and polymerizing the suspension system at an elevated temperature to prepare a PVC based nanocomposite resin composition; and

(c) processing the PVC based nanocomposite resin composition including an impact modifier to produce extruded articles.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a PVC based nanocomposite resin composition comprising the steps of:

(a) adding nano calcium carbonate ~~modified with a metal salt of an organic acid~~, a lipophilic dispersing agent and a polymerization initiator to a vinyl chloride monomer to disperse them,

wherein the nano calcium carbonate is dispersed in the vinyl chloride and the surface of nano calcium carbonate is modified by being treated with a metal salt of an organic carboxylic acid, and wherein the lipophilic dispersing agent has a functional group of phosphoric acid, carboxylic acid or its salt or ester so that it is chemically compatible with the modified surface of the nano calcium carbonate;

(b) adding the resultant mixture system to an aqueous solution system comprising deionized water and a suspension stabilizer to prepare a suspension system and performing polymerization at an elevated temperature to prepare a PVC based nanocomposite resin composition; and

(c) processing the PVC based nanocomposite resin composition including an impact modifier to produce extruded articles.

In view of paragraph 6 of instant office action, the invention of claims 1-26 is very similar to the process for making the PVC composition as taught in Tachibana et al.

The difference between the invention of claims 10, 19 and Tachibana et al. is that Tachibana et al. do not teach a PVC composition that has been toughened with MBS.

Mathur et al. (col. 7, line 19, KM-680) disclose that impact modifiers for improving the impact properties of the PVC composition are MBS based polymers. As evident by Detterman (col. 8, line 15-31), KM-680 is a MBS based impact modifier. Therefore, motivated by the expectation of success of obtaining a PVC/calcium carbonate nanoparticles composition with improved impact properties, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in art to incorporate the MBS teachings of Mathur et al. into Tachibana et al. to obtain the MBS features of claims 10, 19.

Further, the difference between the invention of claims 1-26 and Tachibana et al. is that Tachibana et al. do not teach calcium carbonate particles that have been modified with a metal salt of an organic acid.

Mathur et al. (abstract) disclose a PVC composition comprising modifying the PVC resins to improve impact strength. Mathur et al. (col. 7, line 23-24) disclose that the PVC compositions comprises calcium carbonate particles that have been surface modified with sodium stearate, a metal salt of an organic acid. Motivated by the expectation of success of obtaining a PVC/calcium carbonate composition with improved impact properties (col. 3, line 49-57), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in art to incorporate the sodium stearate modified calcium carbonate particle teachings of Mathur et al. into Tachibana et al. to obtain the invention of claims 1-26.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed July 1, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicants argue that cited references, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest a nanocalcium carbonate/vinyl chloride monomer dispersion composition having a lipophilic dispersing agent with a specific amount. However, applicants fail to recognize that the nanocalcium carbonate as taught is a filler. Therefore, the examiner has a reasonable basis that the amount to be used has to be greater than 1 part per 100 parts of resins.

Regarding applicants' argument that the stabilizer disclosed in Tachibana et al. are for stabilizing the suspension of organic phase while the claimed lipophilic

dispersing agent acts to disperse the nano calcium carbonate into the vinyl chloride monomer uniformly and ultra-finely. However, applicants fail to recognize that composition teachings in Tachibana et al. still teach the composition as claimed. Applicants must recognize that the intended use of the dispersant as claimed carries very little patentable weight since the claimed invention is a product invention of a composition.

Regarding applicants' argument that the claimed inventions involve adding a lipophilic dispersing agent having a functional group of phosphoric acid, carboxylic acid or its salt or ester so that it is chemically compatible with the modified surface of the nano calcium carbonate, applicants fail to recognize that Mathur et al. (col. 7, line 23-24) clearly disclose that the PVC compositions comprises calcium carbonate particles that have been surface modified with sodium stearate, a metal salt of an organic acid. Applicants must recognize that the disclosed sodium stearate can be considered as the argued lipophilic dispersing agent in view of applicants' claim 14 (line 6), "C₁-C₃₀ hydrocarbon".

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William K. Cheung whose telephone number is (571) 272-1097. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00AM to 2:00PM; 4:00PM to 8:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David WU can be reached on (571) 272-1114. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/William K Cheung/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1796

William K. Cheung, Ph. D.
Primary Examiner
March 24, 2008